



THE *NEW*  
INDUCTIVE  
STUDY SERIES

# Praising God Through Prayer and *Worship*

KAY ARTHUR  
PETE DE LACY

Psalms

Praising God  
Through  
Prayer and  
*W*orship

KAY ARTHUR  
PETE DE LACY

 **Precept**<sup>™</sup>  
SOUTH AFRICA

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The New Inductive Study Series

## PRaising GOD THROUGH PRAYER AND WORSHIP

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 **Precept™**  
SOUTH AFRICA

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## HOW TO GET STARTED



Reading directions is sometimes difficult and hardly ever enjoyable! Most often you just want to get started. Only if all else fails will you read the instructions. I understand, but please don't approach this study that way. These brief instructions are a vital part of getting started on the right foot! These few pages will help you immensely.

### FIRST

As you study Psalms, you will need four things in addition to this book:

1. A Bible that you are willing to mark in. Marking is essential because it is an integral part of the learning process and will help you remember and retain what you learn. An ideal Bible for this purpose is *The New Inductive Study Bible (NISB)*. The *NISB*, available in the New American Standard Version, comes in a single-column text format with larger, easy-to-read type, and is ideal for marking. The page margins are wide and blank for note-taking.

The *NISB* is unique among all study Bibles in that it has instructions for studying each book of the Bible, but it does not contain any commentary on the text. The *NISB* isn't compiled from any particular theological stance because its purpose is to teach you how to discern truth for yourself through the inductive method of study. *Inductive* Bible study simply means that the Bible itself is the primary source for study. (The various charts and maps that you will find in this study guide are taken from the *NISB*.) Whatever Bible you use, just know you will need to mark in it, which brings us to the second item you will need ...

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1. Pentel pencils and Micron pens can be purchased from Precept South Africa, please call us on +27 (021) 531 1836, send an email to [support@precept.org.za](mailto:support@precept.org.za) or purchase online at [shop.precept.org.za](http://shop.precept.org.za).

2. A fine-point, four-color ballpoint pen or various colored fine-point pens (such as Micron pens) for writing in your Bible. The Micron pens are best for this purpose. Office supply stores should have these.

3. Colored pencils or an eight-color *Pentel* pencil.

4. A composition notebook or loose-leaf notebook for working on your assignments and recording your insights.

## SECOND

1. As you study Psalms, you will be given specific instructions for each day's study. These should take you between 20 and 30 minutes a day, but if you spend more time than this, you will increase your intimacy with the Word of God and the God of the Word.

If you are doing this study in a class and you find the lessons too heavy, simply do what you can. To do a little is better than to do nothing. Don't be an all-or-nothing person when it comes to Bible study.

As a word of warning, you need to be aware that any time you get into the Word of God, you enter into more intensive warfare with the devil (our enemy). Why? Every piece of the Christian's armor is related to the Word of God. And the enemy doesn't want you prepared for battle. Thus, the warfare! Remember that our one and only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and it is enough to fell the enemy.


To study or not to study is a matter of choice first, discipline second. It's a matter of the heart. On what or whom are you setting your heart? Get armed for war! And remember, victory is certain.

2. As you read each chapter, train yourself to think through the content of the text by asking the "5 W's and an H": who, what, when, where, why, and how. Posing questions like these and searching out the answers help you see exactly what the Word of God is saying.

When you interrogate the text with the 5 W's and an H, you ask questions like these:

- a. **Who** are the main characters?
- b. **What** is the chapter about?
- c. **When** does this event or teaching take place?
- d. **Where** does this occur?
- e. **Why** is this being done or said?
- f. **How** did this happen?


3. Locations are important in many books of the Bible, so marking references to these in a distinguishable way will be helpful to you. I simply underline every reference to a location in green (grass and trees are green!) using my four-color ballpoint pen. A map is included in this study so you can look up the locations.

4. The “when” of events or teachings is very important and should be marked in an easily recognizable way in your Bible. We do this by putting a circle (like the one shown here)  in the margin of our Bibles beside the verse where the time phrase occurs. Or you may want to underline references to time in one specific color. As a reminder, note on your key word bookmark (which is explained next in this section) how you are going to mark time references in each chapter.

5. You will be told about certain key words that you should mark throughout this study. This is the purpose of the colored pencils and the colored pens. While this may seem a little time-consuming, you will discover that it is a valuable learning tool. If you will develop the habit of marking your Bible, you will find it will make a significant difference in the effectiveness of your study and in how much you retain as a result of your study.

A **key word** is an important word that the author uses repeatedly in order to convey his message to his readers. Certain key words will show up throughout Psalms; others will be concentrated in a specific psalm. When you mark a key word, you should also mark its synonyms (words that mean the same thing in the context) and any pronouns (*he, his, she, her, it, we, they, us, our, you, their, them*) in the same way you have marked the key word. Also, mark each word the same way in

all of its forms (such as *judge*, *judgment*, and *judging*). We will give you suggestions for ways to mark key words in your daily assignments.

You can use colors or symbols or a combination of colors and symbols to mark words for easy identification. However, colors are easier to distinguish than symbols. When we use symbols, we keep them very simple. For example, you could draw a red heart around the word *love* like this:  *love*.

When marking key words, mark them in a way that is easy for you to remember.

If you devise a color-coding system for marking key words throughout your Bible, then when you look at the pages of your Bible, you will see instantly where a key word is used. You might want to make yourself a bookmark listing the words you mark along with their colors and/or symbols.

6. A PSALMS AT A GLANCE chart is included at the end of this book. As you complete your study of a psalm, record the main theme of that psalm under the appropriate psalm number. The main theme of a psalm is what the psalm deals with the most. It may be a particular subject or teaching.

If you will fill out the PSALMS AT A GLANCE chart as you progress through the study, you will have a synopsis of Psalms when you are finished. If you have a *New Inductive Study Bible*, you will find the same chart in your Bible (page 1014). If you record your themes there, you will have them for a ready reference.

7. Always begin your study with prayer. As you do your part to handle the Word of God accurately, you must remember that the Bible is a divinely inspired book. The words that you are reading are truth, given to you by God so you can know Him and His ways more intimately. These truths are divinely revealed.

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for  
the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.  
For who among men knows the thoughts of a man

except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-11).

Therefore ask God to reveal His truth to you as He leads and guides you into all truth. He will if you will ask.

8. Each day when you finish your lesson, meditate on what you saw. Ask your heavenly Father how you should live in light of the truths you have just studied. At times, depending on how God has spoken to you through His Word, you might even want to write LFL (“Lessons for Life”) in the margin of your Bible and then, as briefly as possible, record the lesson for life that you want to remember.

### THIRD

This study is set up so that you have an assignment for every day of the week—so that you are in the Word daily. If you work through your study in this way, you will find it more profitable than doing a week’s study in one sitting. Pacing yourself this way allows time for thinking through what you learn on a daily basis!

The seventh day of each week differs from the other six days. The seventh day is designed to aid group discussion; however, it’s also profitable if you are studying this book individually.

The “seventh” day is whatever day in the week you choose to finish your week’s study. On this day, you will find a verse or two for you to memorize and STORE IN YOUR HEART. Then there is a passage to READ AND DISCUSS. This will help you focus on a major truth or major truths covered in your study that week.

To assist those using the material in a Sunday school class or a group Bible study, there are QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY. Even if you are not doing this study with anyone else, answering these questions would be good for you.

If you are in a group, be sure every member of the class, including the teacher, supports his or her answers and insights from the Bible text itself. Then you will be handling the Word of God accurately. As you learn

to see what the text says and compare Scripture with Scripture, the Bible explains itself.

Always examine your insights by carefully observing the text to see what it *says*. Then, before you decide what the passage of Scripture *means*, make sure that you interpret it in the light of its context. Scripture will never contradict Scripture. If it ever seems to contradict the rest of the Word of God, you can be certain that something is being taken out of context. If you come to a passage that is difficult to understand, reserve your interpretations for a time when you can study the passage in greater depth.

The purpose of the THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK is to share with you what we consider to be an important element in your week of study. We have included it for your evaluation and, hopefully, for your edification. This section will help you see how to walk in light of what you learned.

Books in the New Inductive Study Series are survey courses. If you want to do a more in-depth study of a particular book of the Bible, we suggest you do a Precept Upon Precept Bible study course on that book. You may obtain more information on these courses by contacting Precept Sout Africa.<sup>2</sup>

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2. Please call us on +27 (0)21 531 1836, send an email to [support@precept.org.za](mailto:support@precept.org.za) or purchase online at [shop.precept.org.za](http://shop.precept.org.za).

## INTRODUCTION TO PSALMS



Man needs to pour out his heart to God, to come before Him and honestly present his concerns and feelings—whether distress or joy, confusion or confidence. Man in right relationship to God was made to sing, to lift up his voice in worship, to speak to God and to others “in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with [his] heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19).

That’s why some psalms include instructions for accompaniment with stringed instruments or flutes. David, who wrote many of the psalms, appointed Levites to serve in the house of the Lord. Scripture tells us about this transition that followed Israel’s wandering: “They ministered with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem” (1 Chronicles 6:31-32).

Psalms is a book of prayer and praise, written by several men inspired by God. The collection of 150 individual psalms is organized into five books. Psalms is not a continuous, chronologically arranged story like we find in the historical books. Unlike prophecy, Psalms has no continuing message developed chronologically or thematically. And unlike epistles (letters), Psalms has no continuous unifying teaching or train of thought throughout the book. The book is an anthology—a collection of 150 different prayers, praises, or songs.

Each psalm is a unit of expression, composed during a moment of need or desire. Each has a unique purpose, although many can be grouped in categories, like the psalms of ascents.

As you study the psalms, remember that they are poems. Hebrew poetry does not contain rhyme and meter like much English poetry. Instead, Hebrew poetry's distinctive feature is parallelism of some form—one line relates to another in various ways. Usually the poetic lines are composed of two (sometimes three) segments in which the second segment repeats, contrasts, or completes the first. Psalms vary in design. Some are acrostics, with each verse or stanza beginning with the next letter from the Hebrew alphabet.

The majority of the psalms have a superscription at the beginning, which designates one or several things: the composer, the occasion, whom it is written for, how it should be accompanied, and what kind of psalm it is. If a psalm has a superscription, read it and consult cross-references noted. This will help you put the psalm into context.

Watch for a theme for each psalm and how it is developed. Sometimes it's stated at the beginning of the psalm, other times in the middle. The theme is the author's design for the psalm (which of course is God's intention).

Some psalms give insights into the history of Israel (such as Psalm 78). Study these carefully. Note the events, God's intervention, and God's watchful care.

Don't miss the central focus of psalms—God. You can learn many things that will lead you to worship and adore Him more. Carefully observe His names, titles, and attributes, and note the believers' *supernatural* response to Him. (You'll also see unbelievers' *natural* responses.)

Don't forget to look for Jesus, who said, "All things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44).

In a notebook, record your insights about God. As you do this, meditate on what you learn. Spend time in praise and prayer. Let the book of Psalms help you love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, body, soul, and strength.

Finally, because hymns and contemporary praise music often are based on psalms, when you read words that remind you of a melody, feel free to sing along to God. Pour out your heart to Him as the psalmists did. And listen for His response. Become intimate with God in your prayer and worship.

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# PSALMS

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## WHAT WOULD DAVID DO?



Remember the popular question, what would Jesus do? If you study the Gospels, the answer is clear—He would pray early, late, and often. He would cry out to God, confident that God would hear and answer. Was Jesus' prayer life special because He was the Son of God, God made flesh? Yes! Did His pattern reflect the Old Testament, God's Word to mankind in writing? Yes again! The psalms show us how David and others prayed in the millennium before Jesus was born.



As you read any book of the Bible, you'll see the author emphasize subjects by repeating key words and phrases. Since you'll be marking many of these words and phrases throughout Psalms, a good technique is to record them and how you plan to mark them on a 3 x 5 card and use this as a bookmark. Doing this from psalm to psalm will help you mark consistently and save time.

Read through Psalm 1 (it's only six verses) to see what the psalm is about. Now read it again, and mark every reference to the *Lord*, including pronouns. To help you get started, we suggest you mark *Lord* with a purple triangle shaded yellow, and mark *blessed* with a purple

cloud around it shaded pink. You'll see this second key word over and over in the psalms in other forms (*bless, blessing, and blesses*).

Perhaps you noticed the contrast between two kinds of men. Contrasts are usually introduced by the word *but*, so watch for this indicator as you read. You can mark them with a little "lightning bolt" like this: ~~but~~ or a simple slant like this: *but*

Read the psalm again, marking *wicked*<sup>1</sup> and its synonyms and also the contrasting *righteous*. You may want to circle *wicked* with a black cloud and write an *R* through *righteous*.

What is the righteous man like? What does he do and not do? What is he compared to?

What is the wicked man like, and what is he compared to? How does this contrast help you understand how God views the two kinds of people? What are the righteous promised?

Which would you rather be? Why?

Determine a theme for this psalm and record it on PSALMS AT A GLANCE, on page 174.

Now let's look at Psalm 2. Mark *nations* and its synonyms, *Lord* (watch for pronouns too), *Son* (read carefully so you catch all the synonyms), and *Zion*. Consider marking *nations* green and underlining it brown. Mark *Lord* as you did in Psalm 1. Before you choose a way to mark *Son*, identify Him. (If you're unsure, read Acts 13:32-33 for a little help.)

Add *nations, Zion, and Son* to your bookmark.

What attitude toward God do the nations (the peoples, kings, and rulers) have?

What is God's attitude toward the nations? What evidence does the text give to help you understand why God has this attitude?

Read Micah 4:1-3 to see how the message of Psalm 2:1-4 applies to a prophet in "the last days."

If the nations believed this psalm's truth about the King, what would their attitude be, and how would they act? What does God tell them?

Some classify this as a coronation psalm, written to celebrate the anointing and installation of David or one of his descendants as king.

How does Psalm 2 help you see that its powerful truth has a future fulfillment? How does it promise hope for you and me today?

How does this psalm help you pray and worship more intimately?

Finally, determine a theme for this psalm and record it on PSALMS AT A GLANCE.

  
 D A Y T W O  


Today read Psalm 3 and mark references to the *Lord* and to the psalmist (identified by pronouns such as *I*, *me*, and *my*). Simply underline or color references to the psalmist. The superscription identifies the author and what his occasion for writing was. For us the issue is not so much what David felt on a specific occasion, but generally how we relate in our circumstances to the cry of the psalmist's heart.

How do you relate to the psalmist's cry? Mark *save* and add it to your bookmark.

What truths about God help you cling to Him in times of distress?

The psalmist cried out for God's blessing on His people (verse 8). During Old Testament times this would probably refer to whom? To whom today? Is there hope for blessing for those who belong to God today?

What time of day does this prayer seem to refer to?

Think on these things and then record a theme for Psalm 3 on PSALMS AT A GLANCE.

Now read Psalm 4 and mark references to the *Lord*. This is a pattern for all the psalms, but we'll keep reminding so you won't forget. Just remember, Beloved of God: Habits are developed by repetition. We hope that by the end of your study of Psalms, this will become your habit for studying the Word.

As in Psalm 3, the psalmist refers to his own condition—things going on around him. Mark references to the psalmist as you did before and take note of his circumstances. Also note the time of day as you did in Psalm 3.

Note the contrast between two kinds of people. Mark *sin* in verse 4 and add it to your bookmark. Throughout the Bible, sin and righteousness are major determinants of man's relationship with God.

Which category does the psalmist put himself in? Do you identify with him? Can you turn this psalm into your own prayer before you go to bed tonight?

Finally, record a theme for Psalm 4 on PSALMS AT A GLANCE.

  
 D A Y T H R E E  


Read Psalm 5 and note the psalmist's purpose for writing and the timing. Now read it again and mark references to the *Lord*, the psalmist, and his enemies. Add *sing*<sup>2</sup> and *lovingkindness*<sup>3</sup> to your bookmark and mark them in this psalm. *Lovingkindness* describes covenant love, steadfast and merciful. Also mark *iniquity*<sup>4</sup> and *transgression*,<sup>5</sup> synonyms for *sin*. Although there are sometimes slight distinctions in meaning in the Hebrew, they're minor and infrequent enough for us to mark these words the same way for now. Add these to your bookmark because you'll see them over and over in Psalms.

What characteristics of the Lord do you see in this psalm? How do they compare with what you learned in the first four psalms? The psalms are so rich in describing God and His works, you might enjoy journaling what you learn about Him from psalm to psalm. It's early enough in the study so if you want to do this, go back to day 1 and compile into one list what you've seen so far. Add what you learn from each of the remaining 145 psalms.

What is God's attitude toward wickedness in all its forms? What contrast do you see between sinful behavior and what God is like? Notice that the contrast is not between David's enemies and himself, but between his enemies and God. What does this tell you about David?

How does David's example contrast with the way people relate to God today? How do you relate to Him?

Determine a theme for Psalm 5 on PSALMS AT A GLANCE




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 DAY FOUR
 

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Read Psalm 6 without stopping to mark anything. What kind of psalm is this? What does the psalmist ask for? Verse 2 says his “bones are dismayed,”<sup>6</sup> and he asks to be healed. What seems to be his problem? How does verse 2 relate to verse 1?

Again, read and mark references to the *Lord* and the psalmist, and add to your journal about God.

When David asks for healing, does he appeal to his character or God’s? What characteristics does David appeal to?

Lovingkindness (verse 4) is a characteristic of God we see throughout the Bible. The word is translated from the Hebrew *chesed*, a covenant term.

Observe the verb tenses in verses 8 and 9. “Has heard” in English implies action already completed. What does this tell you about David’s confidence in prayer? Do you have this confidence? If not, our prayer for you is that by the end of this study of psalms you will gain this intimacy and confidence in prayer and worship that David had toward God.

Don’t forget to record a theme for Psalm 6 on PSALMS AT A GLANCE.




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 DAY FIVE
 

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Read Psalm 7 today, marking *Lord*, *sing*, *praise*, *righteousness*,<sup>7</sup> *wicked*, and *judgment*. Add the new key words to your bookmark. You’ll find *sing*, *praise*, and *thanks* throughout the psalms.

Now, what did you see regarding justice for the righteous and his enemies? What conditions bring judgment? What brings vindication? What characteristic of God is the basis for just judgment?

What did you learn about God to take to heart today, to trust in as David the psalmist did?

Finally, determine a theme for Psalm 7 and record it on PSALMS AT A GLANCE.

  
 DAY SIX

Get ready to sing today, Beloved. Read the first and last verses of Psalm 8 and mark repeated phrases that remind you of praise choruses or songs.

Now read the whole psalm, marking references to *God* and *man*. Then list everything you learn about God and man in these nine verses.

What do you see about yourself in relation to God? How will you respond to God today in worship in light of this truth?

Finally, determine a theme for Psalm 8 and record it on PSALMS AT A GLANCE.

  
 DAY SEVEN



Store in your heart: Psalm 5:3

Read and discuss: Psalms 1–8

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

- ☞ What situations in the psalmist's life caused him to cry out to God?
- ☞ What did you learn about God's character and ways in these psalms?
- ☞ What did you learn about the relationship between God and the nations—those who do not obey Him?
- ☞ Do these psalms give you patterns for prayer—when to pray, why to pray, and how to pray?
- ☞ Summarize the message of these psalms—share what you put on PSALMS AT A GLANCE.

- ☞ What message of hope do these psalms give?
- ☞ What applications can you make to your own life?
- ☞ How does this week's study motivate you to pray?

### THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Psalm 5:3 says, "In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; in the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch." Oh, that we would eagerly watch for God's answer. What a great example! Think about this: Every morning when you wake up, lift your voice to God in prayer for that day. Then eagerly watch through the day to see His answers. Wow! Wouldn't you like to have that reliance on God? Maybe you already do.

Cultivating this intimacy with God takes time and practice. It's developed over a lifetime of various circumstances. Wherever you are in your walk with God, whatever He has taken you through, He is always there. His lovingkindness and mercies are new every morning. He never abandons you.

The superscriptions of Psalms 3 through 8 tell us David wrote them. Even if you haven't studied 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles to learn about David, you can learn volumes about his life from the way he prays and the things he prays for.

How about you? If people overheard you praying, would they know about your life, about what's going on? Would they learn about your daily needs, wants, and fears, as well as the reasons for your confidence?

What would your prayer life reveal about your relationship to God? If you made a list of what you asked Him for, what you said to Him, and how you praised Him for what He has done and will do, would people know you worship God?

And if people wrote down your prayers for a day, would they get the idea that you truly rely on God? After all, in these first eight psalms

we've already seen prayer in the morning and evening, on arising and retiring. When do you pray?

We've asked these questions to cause you to take stock, to start to measure your own intimacy with God in prayer and worship. The Word of God will do its work as you continue through the psalms. It will lay bare things that need healing, but it will also give you encouragement and hope.

As we spend a lifetime praying, we gain more and more confidence and more and more intimacy with God from our eager watchfulness for His answers. Often we think of prayer as communicating *to* God, talking *to* or *with* Him, and our Bible reading and study as hearing *from* God. Both are true. If we don't apprehend these two functions properly, our intimacy with God won't grow as deep as it should.

Prayer is indeed talking to God and answers are God speaking back to us. Answers may come right away or be delayed. We may need a season of prayer before we receive an answer, and Scripture emphasizes persevering prayer. But God does speak back to us.

Bible reading and study is clearly hearing from God, but we must come before Him in prayer before we begin because spiritual things are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:13-15). We ask our resident Teacher, the Holy Spirit, to open the eyes of our understanding. The insight into Scripture that He gives is the answer to prayer.

Psalm 1:2 points to this twofold approach to God. It describes the man who is blessed: "But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night." Prayer and Bible reading and study go hand in hand in our communication with God—a growing intimacy that helps us worship Him in all we do.

PSALMS AT A GLANCE

SEGMENT DIVISIONS

		CHAPTER THEMES	<i>Author:</i>	
		1		
		2		
		3	<i>Date:</i>	
		4		
		5	<i>Geographical Location:</i>	
		6		
		7		
		8	<i>Purpose:</i>	
		9		
		10		
		11	<i>Key Words (and synonyms):</i>	
		12		affliction
		13		take refuge
		14		righteous
		15		wicked
		16		sin (iniquity)
		17		prayer
		18		praise
		19		sing
		20		fear
		21		hope
		22		save
		23		cry
		24		
		25		